

Electrical Safety

Electrical fires in our homes take the lives of 485 Americans each year, 2,305 more are injured. Some of these fires are caused by electrical system failures and appliance defects but many more are caused by the misuse and poor maintenance of electrical appliances, incorrectly installed wiring and overloaded circuits and extension cords.

The Problem

Home electrical problems account for 67,800 fires, 485 deaths and \$868 million in property losses every year. Electrical wiring causes twice as many fires as electrical appliances.

The Facts

Most electrical fires are in December, making it the most dangerous month for home fires. During winter, the shorter and colder days call for more indoor activities and an increase in lighting, heating and appliance use. Most electrical wiring fires start in the bedroom.

The Cause

Electrical Wiring

Most electrical fires result from problems with "fixed wiring" such as faulty electrical outlets and old wiring. Problems with cords and plugs, such as extension and appliance cords, also cause many home electrical fires.

In urban areas, faulty wiring accounts for 33% of residential electrical fires.

Many avoidable electrical fires can be traced to misuse of electric cords, such as overloading circuits, poor maintenance and running the cords under rugs or in high traffic areas.

Home Appliances

The appliances most often involved in electrical fires are electric stoves and ovens, dryers, central heating units, televisions and stereo equipment.

Safety Precautions

- Routinely check your electrical appliances and wiring.
- Frayed wires can cause fires. Replace all worn, old or damaged appliance cords immediately.
- Use electrical extension cords wisely and don't overload them.
- Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and counters; pay special care to electrical appliances in the bathroom and kitchen.